

Message Text

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15

ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ADP-00 IO-12 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09 H-02

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15

USIA-12 OMB-01 AF-10 RSR-01 M-03 A-01 SY-10 USSS-00

AID-20 EB-11 SCA-01 /174 W
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R 181825 Z APR 73

FM AMEMBASSY ROME

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8373

INFO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 3114

E.9. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS LE US SY

SUBJECT: SYRIAN REACTION TO ISRAEL RAID

REF: ROME 2982

1. FONOFF HAS RECEIVED CABLE FROM ITALIAN EMBASSY DAMASCUS
REPORTING

THAT DEMARCHE REQUESTED BY US (REFTEL) WILL BE MADE TODAY APRIL 18).
CABLE EXPLAINED THAT SYRIAN RELIGIOUS TURMOIL HAD PREVENTED EARLIER
ACTION ON DEMARCHE REQUEST.

2. FONOFF OFFICIAL NOTED THAT DAMASCUS CABLE ALSO CONTAINED INTER-
ESTING ITALIAN EMBASSY COMMENTS ON SYRIAN REACTION IN AFTERMATH
OF ISRAELI RAID ON LEBANON. REPORT STATES THAT, WHILE THERE
HAS BEEN HEAVY PRESS CAMPAIGN AGAINST ISRAEL AND US AS A RESULT OF
ATTACK, THERE HAS BEEN NO REPEAT NO SIGN OF INCITEMENT AGAINST
US CITIZENS OR DIPLOMATS EITHER IN THE PRESS OR RADIO BROADCASTS.
PRESS CAMPAIGN HAS TAPERED OFF AND PUBLIC ATTENTION IS NOW CENTERED
ON INTERNAL PROBLEMS (I. E. RELIGIOUS QUESTION).

3. ITALIAN EMBASSY REPORT ALSO NOTES THAT SYRIAN SOURCE CLOSE TO
PALESTINIAN ORGANIZATION HAS BEEN TOLD BY PALESTINIAN
OFFICIAL HTAT THEY DETERMINED TO RETALIATE AGAINST US AND
ISRAELI DIPLOMATS EVEN AT RISK OF HEAVY LOSS OF PALESTINIAN LIVES.
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THIS COURSE OF ACTION IS BELIEVED ESSENTIAL FOR PALESTINIAN CAUSE.

4. ACCORDING TO REPORT, SYRIAN AUTHORITIES APPEAR DETERMINED NOT REPEAT NOT TO BE DRAGGED ALONG BY PALESTINIAN ACTION. REPORT ESTIMATES SYRIANS LIKELY TO AVOID INVOLVEMENT. IN SUPPORT OF THIS VIEW, REPORT CITES A) SYRIAN CONTROL OVER PRESS; B) CONTINUED STRICT CONTROL OVER RESIDENT PALESTINIANS AND C) INSTITUTION OF MEASURES INCLUDING THREAT OF ARREST AIMED AT PREVENTING LOCAL RADICAL ELEMENTS FROM STRIRRING UP TROUBLE. REPORT CONCLUDES WITH JUDGEMENT THAT SYRIANS HAVE ADOPTED MIDDLE COURSE OF CONTINUED SUPPORT FOR PALESTINIAN CAUSE COUPLED WITH STRONG OPPOSITION TO EXTREMIST SOLUTIONS. SYRIANS THUS HOPE TO AVOID JEOPARDIZING ARAB CAUSE AND INCURRING FURTHER ISRAELI REPRISALS. BEAUDRY

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*** Current Handling Restrictions *** n/a

*** Current Classification *** CONFIDENTIAL

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